

Scope of This Section IX and Related Provisions

This Section IX protects and regulates speech, expression, and assembly of students and faculty/staff members that is not part of the teaching or other official functions of the College District, not otherwise sponsored by the College District or any academic or administrative unit, and not submitted for academic credit.

This Section IX also regulates certain speech that is part of the teaching or other official functions of the College District. This entire Section applies to speech by academic and administrative units, and speech that is submitted for academic credit, in outdoor locations on the campus. The Vice President of Student Development Services or designee will carry out the duties designated in Section IX and work directly with College District persons or organizations and off-campus persons and organizations to assist in ensuring their freedom of speech, expression, and assembly as authorized under this section.

The Vice President of Student Development Services office administers and schedules outdoor signs, tables, exhibits, public assemblies, and amplified sound, even for students, faculty/staff members, and administrative and academic units, because scheduling through a single office is necessary to avoid conflicts.

Any program or event sponsored by an academic or administrative unit of the College District will have priority in the use of space and facilities over any speech, expression, and assembly that is not sponsored by an academic or administrative unit, except that programs or events sponsored by an academic or administrative unit will not have priority in the use of weekday amplified sound areas defined in this section. This section does not limit other existing authority of College District officials to authorize programs and events sponsored by an academic or administrative unit not provided for in this section.

Additional rules concerning free speech and academic freedom of faculty members are found in the *TCCD Policy and Regulation Manual*.

General Definitions—Categories of Speakers

As used in this section:

1. “Academic or administrative unit” means any office or department of the College District;
2. “Faculty/staff member” includes any person who is employed by the College District;
3. “Off-campus person or organization” means any person, organization or business that is not an academic or administrative unit, a registered student organization or faculty/staff organization, student or faculty/staff member;
4. “College District person or organization” includes academic and administrative units, a registered student organization or faculty/staff organization, student or faculty/staff member.
5. “Registered student organization or faculty/staff organization” includes a registered student organization, a faculty/staff organization, and any unit or subdivision thereof;
6. “Student” means a person who is currently enrolled in the College District, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the College District, or who has been enrolled at the College District in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the College District while that person is on campus; and

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7. "Event" means something that occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time; events include but are not limited to guest speakers, exhibits, tables, distribution of literature, signs, and public assemblies.

Other General Definitions

1. "Amplified sound" means sound whose volume is increased by any electric, electronic, mechanical or motor-powered means. Shouting, group chanting and acoustic musical instruments are exempt from this rule and are not subject to the special rules on amplified sound, but are subject to general rules on disruption.
2. "Room or space" includes any room or space, indoors or outdoors, owned or controlled by the College District.
3. "Weekday" means Monday through Friday, except holidays and days on which regularly scheduled classes are suspended due to emergent situations.
4. "Day" means calendar day, except holidays and days on which regularly scheduled classes are suspended due to emergent situations.

Prohibited Expression

Obscenity

No person or organization will distribute or display on the campus any writing or visual image, or engage in any public performance, that is obscene. A writing, image or performance is "obscene" if it is obscene as defined in Texas Penal Code, Section 21.08, or successor provisions, and is within the constitutional definition of obscenity as set forth in decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

Defamation

1. No person or organization will make, distribute or display on campus any statement that unlawfully defames any other person.
2. A statement unlawfully defames another person if it is false, if the false portion of the statement injures the reputation of the other person, and if the speaker has the constitutionally required state of mind as set forth in decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

Incitement to Imminent Violations of Law

No person or organization will make, distribute or display on campus any statements directed to inciting or producing imminent violations of law under circumstances such that the statements are likely to actually and imminently incite or produce violations of law.

Solicitation

1.
 - a. No person or organization will make, distribute or display on campus any statement that offers or advertises any product or service for sale or lease that includes commercial identifiers, such as for-profit logos, trademarks and service marks, or that requests any gift or contribution, except as authorized by the TCCD *Policy and Regulation Manual*.

- b. Words or symbols on personal apparel, or on decals or bumper stickers affixed to a vehicle by an owner of that vehicle, are not solicitation within this definition.
 - c. Unadorned acknowledgments or thanks to donors are not solicitation within this definition.
- 2.
- a. A registered student or faculty/staff organization may advertise or sell merchandise, publications, food or nonalcoholic beverages, or request contributions, for the benefit of the organization, for the benefit of another registered student or faculty/staff organization, or for the benefit of an organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No organization may sell items obtained on consignment. No organization may request contributions for an off-campus tax-exempt organization for more than 14 days in any fiscal year.
 - b. Registered student organizations or faculty/staff organizations, and academic and administrative units, may sell, distribute, or display literature that contains advertising, subject to the Limits on Advertising set forth in this Section. Individual students or faculty/staff members may distribute or display such literature, but may not sell it.
 - c. Individual students or faculty/staff members may post advertisements for roommates, subleases, and sales of used goods that the seller has personally owned and used, but only on a bulletin board designated for that purpose by an academic or administrative unit in space that the unit occupies or controls. Any unit that designates a bulletin board for this purpose may regulate that bulletin board under the procedures set forth in Signs and Other Designated Locations in this Section IX.
 - d. A registered student organization or faculty/staff organization may sell charitable raffle tickets on behalf of an organization that is authorized to conduct a charitable raffle under the Texas Charitable Raffle Enabling Act, Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 2002, or successor provisions.

General Rules on Means of Expression

Disruption

1. Except as expressly authorized in the Amplified Sound part of this section, or by an authorized College District official responsible for a program or event sponsored by an academic or administrative unit, no speech, expression or assembly may be conducted in a way that disrupts or interferes with any:
 - a. Teaching, administration or other authorized activities on the campus;
 - b. Free and unimpeded flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the campus; or
 - c. Signs, tables, exhibits, public assemblies, distribution of literature, guest speakers, or use of amplified sound by another person or organization acting under the rules in this chapter.

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2.
 - a. The term "disruption" and its variants, as used in this rule, are distinct from and broader than the phrase "disruptive activities," as used in this Handbook. This rule is concerned not only with deliberate disruption, but also with scheduling and coordination of events to manage or minimize the inevitable conflicts between legitimate events conducted in close proximity.
 - b. Except in the most extreme cases, interference and disruption are unavoidably contextual. Intentional physical interference with other persons is nearly always disruptive in any context. Interfering with traffic depends on the relation between the volume of traffic and the size of the passageway left open. Disruptive noise is the most contextual of all, because it depends on the activity disrupted. Any distracting sound may disrupt a memorial service. Any sound sufficiently loud or persistent to make concentration difficult may disrupt a class or library. These illustrations may be helpful, but none of them includes enough context to be taken as a rule. The College District must rely on the judgment and fairness of College District authorities in particular cases. In this context where difficult enforcement judgments are unavoidable, it is especially important to remind administrators and law enforcement officials that their judgments should not be influenced by the viewpoint of those claiming disruption or of those allegedly disrupting.
3. Potentially disruptive events can often proceed without disruption if participants, administrators, and law enforcement officials cooperate to avoid disruption without stopping the event. In cases of marginal or unintentional disruption, administrators and law enforcement officials should clearly state what they consider disruptive and seek voluntary compliance before stopping the event or resorting to disciplinary charges or arrests.

Damage to Property

1. No speech, expression, or assembly may be conducted in a way that damages, defaces, marks, discolors, or alters in any way property of the College District or of any person who has not authorized the speaker to damage or deface his or her property.
2. No person may damage, deface, mark, discolor, alter or interfere with any sign, table or exhibit posted or displayed by another person or organization acting under the rules in this section.

Coercing Attention

1. No person may attempt to coerce, intimidate or badger any other person into viewing, listening to, or accepting a copy of any communication.
2. No person may persist in requesting or demanding the attention of any other person after that other person has attempted to walk away or has clearly refused to attend to the speaker's communication.

Other Rules with Incidental Effects on Speech

1. Other generally applicable or narrowly localized rules, written and unwritten, incidentally limit the time, place and manner of speech, but are too numerous to compile or cross-reference here. For example, libraries typically have highly restrictive rules concerning noise; laboratories and rooms containing the electrical and mechanical infrastructure of the College District typically have safety rules and rules excluding persons without specific business there; fire and safety codes prohibit the obstruction of exits and limit the constriction of hallways. Speech within



classrooms is generally confined to the subject matter of the class; the right to attend a class at all is subject to registration and payment of tuition; individual professors may have rules of decorum in their classrooms. These kinds of rules limit the right of students, faculty members, and staff members to enter and speak in the places to which these rules apply.

2. Reasonable and nondiscriminatory rules of this kind generally control over the rights of free speech guaranteed in this chapter. However, even these kinds of rules are subject to the constitutional right of free speech. Such rules must be viewpoint neutral. Such rules cannot regulate speech more restrictively than they regulate other activities that cause the problems to be avoided by the rule. Such rules should not restrict speech more than is reasonably necessary to serve their purpose. Such rules cannot ban unobtrusive forms of communication with no potential for disruption even in the specialized environment subject to the localized rule. Thus, for example, means of silent expression or protest confined to the speaker's immediate person, such as armbands, buttons and T-shirts, are nearly always protected because they are rarely disruptive in any environment.

Distribution of Literature

General Rule on Distribution of Literature

1. Registered student organizations, faculty/staff organizations, and academic and administrative units, may sell, distribute or display literature on campus, subject to the rules in this section. Individual students and faculty/staff members may distribute or display literature but may not sell it. In either case, no advance permission is required.
2. "Literature" means any printed material, including any newspaper, magazine or other publication, and any leaflet, flyer or other informal matter, that is produced in multiple copies for distribution to potential readers.
3. Distribution of literature in the classrooms and adjacent hallways is considered "disruption" as that term is defined in this Section IX and, therefore, is prohibited.

Cleanup of Abandoned Literature

Any person or organization distributing literature on campus will pick up all copies dropped on the ground in the area where the literature was distributed.

Registered Student Organization Literature Disclaimer

Literature distributed by registered student organizations on campus must contain a disclaimer that indicates that registered student organization literature is not official College District literature and does not represent the views of the College District or its officers.

Signs

General Rule on Signs

1. "Sign" means any method of displaying a visual message to others, except that transferring possession of a copy of the message is distribution of literature and not a sign.

2. Subject to the rules in this Section IX, a College District person or organization may display a sign by holding or carrying it, by displaying it at a table, or by posting it on a bulletin board or other designated location. Signs may not be posted in any other location.

Hand-Held Signs

1. Students and faculty/staff members may display a sign on campus by holding or carrying it by hand or otherwise attaching it to their person. No advance permission is required.
2. Any person holding or carrying a sign will exercise due care to avoid bumping, hitting or injuring any other person.
3. Any person holding or carrying a sign at a speech, performance or other event will exercise due care to avoid blocking the view of any other person observing the speech, performance or event. Depending on the venue, this may mean that signs may be displayed only around the perimeter of a room or an audience.
4. A law enforcement officer or the Vice President of Student Development Services or other College District employee, if authorized by officials responsible for managing the venue, may warn any person that his or her sign is being handled in violation of this Section IX. If the violation persists after a clear warning, the law enforcement officer, Vice President of Student Development Services, or other authorized employee may confiscate the sign.

A-Frames

1. "A-frame" means a movable and self-supporting sign board designed to stand on the ground.
2. A-frames are subject to the rules on exhibits in this Section IX.

Signs in Other Designated Locations (Including Departmental Bulletin Boards)

1. Each academic or administrative unit of the College District may authorize the posting of signs in spaces that unit occupies and controls. Such authorization may be granted by general rule, by stamping or initialing individual signs, or by longstanding tradition.
2. Signs in spaces occupied by academic or administrative units may be:
 - a. Confined to bulletin boards or other designated locations;
 - b. Subjected to viewpoint-neutral rules limiting the size of signs, limiting how long they may be posted, requiring each sign to show the date it was posted and the name of the person or organization who posted it, and similar rules designed to facilitate fair and equal opportunities to post signs; and
 - c. Confined to official statements or business of the unit, or to certain subject matters of interest within the unit, or to signs posted by persons or organizations affiliated with the unit.
3. Each academic or administrative unit will post on or near each bulletin board or other designated location that it administers:
 - a. Either the rules applicable to that bulletin board or location, or a particular office or website where the rules applicable to that bulletin board or location may conveniently be found; and



- b. If a stamp or initials are required on signs before they are posted on that bulletin board or location, the name and office location of the person whose stamp or initials are required.

Tables

General Rule on Tables

College District persons and organizations may set up tables from which to display literature, disseminate information and opinions, and raise funds, subject to the rules in this Section IX. No advance permission is required.

Locations

1. Subject to the restrictions and the rules on disruption of other functions and interference with vehicular and pedestrian traffic in this Section IX, College District persons and organizations may set up tables in any outdoor location on the campus and in any large, open, indoor location.
2.
 - a. Tables may not be set up inside any library, classroom, laboratory or office, or in any hallway less than 10 feet wide, without permission from the academic or administrative unit that controls the space, or from the faculty member or staff member who controls the space at a particular time.
 - b. An academic or administrative unit may further specify these rules by restricting tables to reasonable locations in spaces occupied by that unit. Academic and administrative units are encouraged to clearly state any such rules in writing, and to publish those rules on a website or on a flyer or pamphlet conveniently available at the chief administrative office of the unit.
3. If any table is set up in a prohibited or disruptive location, any College District employee pointing out the violation will also point out other locations, as nearby as is reasonably possible, where the table is permitted.

Cleanup Around Tables

Any person or organization sponsoring a table will remove litter from the area around the table before vacating the space.

Sources of Tables

Persons and organizations may supply their own tables.

Exhibits and A-Frames

General Rule on Exhibits

1. "Exhibit" means an object or collection of related objects, designed to stand on the ground or on a raised surface, which is not a table, is designed for temporary display, and is not permanently attached to the ground. An A-frame sign is an exhibit.

2. Academic or administrative units and registered student, faculty or staff organizations may erect exhibits, subject to the rules in this Section IX. Advance permission is required from the Vice President of Student Development Services, except that an academic unit may authorize indoor exhibits in a space that it occupies and controls.

Application Process

An academic or administrative unit or a registered student organization or faculty/staff organization desiring to erect an outdoor exhibit will apply on a form prescribed by the Vice President of Student Development Services.

Criteria for Approval

1. The Vice President of Student Development Services will authorize an exhibit described in a completed application unless the Vice President of Student Development Services finds that use of the proposed space for the proposed exhibit must be disapproved under the criteria in this Section IX.
2. The Vice President of Student Development Services will specify the location of each exhibit to reduce the hazard to visually impaired pedestrians.
3. The Vice President of Student Development Services will advise each applicant how to correct, if possible, any conditions that preclude approval of the application. Even if an applicant is entitled to have the application approved as submitted, the Vice President of Student Development Services may give advice about other possible locations, or about modifications to the exhibit, that would avoid potential problems or make the proposed exhibit more workable.

Time Limits

1. In locations administered by the Vice President of Student Development Services, each exhibit may be displayed for 14 days. The exhibit may be renewed for an additional 14 days if space is available.
2. The exhibit must be removed at the end of each day and may be re-erected each morning. However, the Vice President of Student Development Services may authorize overnight exhibits in designated locations. Overnight exhibit applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Cleanup Around Exhibits

Any academic or administrative unit or registered student organizations, faculty/staff organization sponsoring an exhibit will remove litter from the area around the exhibit before vacating the space.

Liability

Any academic or administrative unit or registered student organizations or faculty/staff organization sponsoring an exhibit assumes full responsibility for the exhibit, including all injuries or hazards that may arise from the exhibit. The College District will not be liable for any damage that may occur to the exhibit, and any registered student organizations or faculty/staff organization sponsoring the exhibit will indemnify the College District for any claims arising from the exhibit's presence on campus.



Amplified Sound

General Rule on Amplified Sound

Any College District person or organization may use amplified sound on campus at designated times and locations, subject to the rules in this Subsection. Advance permission is required.

Location and Times of Weekday Amplified Sound Areas

1. Campuses

- Northeast Campus – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Grassy area surrounding the outdoor chessboard bounded by sidewalk. This area is located east of the NCAB (Communication Arts Building) and south of the NLIB (Library).
- Northwest Campus – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
“Lawn Area” near the north parking lot between Building WHPE and the walkway leading to Building WSTU.
- South Campus – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
South field across the street from the Flag Poles and bus stop, with sound amplification directed south toward I-20.
- Southeast Campus – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Grassy area southwest of the pool/Art Wing area.
- Trinity River Campus – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
“Clear Fork Lawn,” the lawn area between the Trinity Building and the Clear Fork Building leading toward the river.

2. Vice President of Student Development

- The Vice President of Student Development Services may designate additional areas for weekday use of amplified sound.

Regulation and Scheduling of Amplified Sound

1. The Vice President of Student Development Services may prescribe rules concerning scheduling, sound levels, the location of speakers, and the direction in which they are pointed, and other rules to facilitate the use of weekday amplified sound areas, to mediate any conflict with College District functions and other nearby activities, and to manage environmental impact. All such rules will be reasonable and nondiscriminatory.
2.
 - a. Organizations wishing to use an amplified sound area must reserve a particular area at a particular time. Reservations must be made with the Vice President of Student Development Services on a form prescribed by the Vice President. The Vice President of Student Development Services will approve a properly completed application to reserve an amplified sound area, unless the application must be disapproved under the criteria in this Section IX.

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- b. The Vice President of Student Development Services may limit the number or frequency of reservations for each registered student organization, faculty/staff organization or academic or administrative unit to ensure reasonable access for all persons and organizations desiring to use amplified sound on weekdays.
 - 3. Persons and organizations using amplified sound are responsible for maintaining a passageway for pedestrians that is adequate to the volume of pedestrian traffic passing through the area.
 - 4. Any designations of additional areas, any additional rules regulating the designated areas, and the rules and procedures for reserving the right to use a designated area, will be clearly stated on a website or on a flyer or pamphlet conveniently available at the Vice President of Student Development Services' office.

Public Assemblies Without Amplified Sound

General Rule on Public Assemblies

- 1. "Publicly assemble" and "public assembly" include any gathering of persons, including discussions, rallies and demonstrations.
- 2. College District persons and organizations may publicly assemble on campus in any place where, at the time of the assembly, the persons assembling are permitted to be. This right to assemble is subject to the rules in this Section IX. No advance permission is required.

Notice and Consultation

Registered student organizations or faculty/staff organizations that are planning a public assembly with more than 50 participants are strongly encouraged to notify and consult with the Vice President of Student Development Services as soon as practicable after the point at which the planners anticipate or plan for more than 50 participants. Registered student organizations or faculty/staff organizations planning smaller assemblies are encouraged to consult the Vice President of Student Development Services if there is uncertainty about applicable College District rules, the appropriateness of the planned location, or possible conflict with other events. The Vice President of Student Development Services can help the planners avoid unintended disruption or other violations that may result in subsequent discipline or subsequent interference with the assembly by campus authorities.

Guest Speakers

Definitions

"Guest speaker" means a speaker or performer who is not a College student or faculty/staff member.

Who May Present

Any College District person or organization and academic and administrative units may present guest speakers on College District property. In the case of registered student organizations, advance notification from the Vice President of Student Development Services is required.

Location and Form of Presentation

1. A guest speaker may present a speech or performance, or lead a discussion of specified duration, at a time announced in advance, in a fixed indoor location or in a fixed outdoor location approved by the Vice President of Student Development Services. A guest speaker may distribute literature only immediately before, during and immediately after the normal course of his or her speech, presentation or performance, and only to persons in attendance. Only literature that complies with this Section IX may be distributed.
2. A guest speaker may not
 - a. Accost potential listeners who have not chosen to attend the speech, performance or discussion; or
 - b. Distribute literature to persons who have not chosen to attend the speech, performance or discussion; or
 - c. Help staff a table or exhibit set up under this Section IX.

Application

1. A registered student organization that wishes to present a guest speaker will apply to the Vice President of Student Development Services, on a form prescribed by the Vice President of Student Development Services, at least 48 hours before the scheduled event or any planned advertising for the event, whichever is earlier.
2. The Vice President of Student Development Services will approve an application properly made under this Section IX unless it must be disapproved under the criteria in this Section IX.

Obligations of Presenting Organization

A registered student organization or faculty/staff organization that presents a guest speaker must make clear that:

1. The organization, and not the College District, invited the speaker; and
2. The views expressed by the speaker are his or her own and do not necessarily represent the views of the College District institution.

Responding to Speech, Expression and Assembly

General Rule on Responding

College District persons and organizations may respond to the speech, expression or assembly of others, subject to all the rules in this Section IX.

Applications of General Rule on Responding

1. Responders may not damage or deface signs or exhibits, disrupt public assemblies, block the view of participants, or prevent speakers from being heard.

2. Means of response that are permitted in many locations and without advance permission or reservation, such as signs, tables, distribution of literature, and public assembly without amplified sound, may be used immediately and in any location authorized in this Section IX.
3. Means of response that require advance permission or reservation, such as A-frames, exhibits, and amplified sound, may be used as soon as the needed permission or reservation may be arranged. Some amplified sound areas may be unavailable on short notice because of earlier reservations, but the Vice President of Student Development Services will expedite approval of A-frames, exhibits and available amplified sound areas where necessary to permit appropriate response to other speech, assembly or expression.
4. Means of response that are confined to authorized locations, such as amplified sound, may be used only in those locations. It is not possible to respond to amplified sound with amplified sound in the same location; similarly if an exhibit or public assembly is in a location where amplified sound is not permitted, it is not possible to respond with amplified sound in that location. In either case, it is possible to respond with amplified sound in another location and to use signs or distribution of literature to advertise the response at the other location.

Enforcement and Appeals

Police Protection

1. It is the responsibility of the College District to protect the safety of all persons on campus and to provide police protection for speakers, public assemblies, persons staffing or viewing exhibits, and other events. The normal patrolling of officers during regular duty areas in the area of such events will be at the cost of the College District. When the magnitude, timing or nature of an event requires overtime hours from police officers (including contract hours for officers hired from other departments or private security agencies), the College District will charge the cost of overtime or contract officers to the person or organization sponsoring the event or exhibit that requires overtime police protection. The purpose of this subsection is to charge for police overtime where reasonably possible, but not to charge for police overtime made necessary by the content of speech at the event or by the controversy associated with any event.
2. A reasonable and nondiscriminatory fee for overtime police work will be charged to the registered student or faculty/staff organization for events that require overtime police protection, and
 - a. Charge a price for admission; or
 - b. Pay a speaker, band or other off-campus person or organization for services at the event.
Persons or organizations planning such events should budget for the cost of police protection.
3. The College District will have the sole power to decide, after reasonable consultation with the person or organization planning the event, whether and to what extent overtime police protection is required. No fee will be charged for officers assigned because of political, religious, philosophical, ideological or academic controversy anticipated or actually experienced at the event. All fees will be based on the number of officers required for an uncontroversial event of the same size and kind, in the same place and at the same time of day, handling the same amount of cash.



Response to Violations

A student or student organization which violates a prohibition in this chapter may be disciplined.

Appeals

1. A person or organization that is denied permission for an activity requiring advance permission under this Section IX may appeal the denial of permission to the Vice Chancellor for Community and Administrative Services.
2. A person or organization that complies with an on-the-scene order limiting speech, expression or assembly may, on or before the fifth weekday after complying with the order, file an appeal to determine the propriety of the order limiting the speech, expression, or assembly. The question on appeal will be whether, under the circumstances as they reasonably appeared at the time of the order, the appellant's speech, expression or assembly should have been permitted to continue. Such an appeal may be useful to clarify the meaning of a rule or to resolve a factual dispute that may recur if the appellant desires to resume the speech, expression or assembly that was limited by the order.



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SUCCESS WITHIN REACH.

Incident Reporting Form
Submitted on November 13, 2015 at 11:10:50 am CST

12
1-8

Type: **General Conduct Report**
Urgency: **Normal**

Incident Date: **2015-11-09**
Incident Time: **9:50 am**
Incident Location: **Trinity River Campus Student Life Center**

Reported by

Name: **Amber Bernal**
Title: **Student Life Center Student Worker**
Email: **amber.bernal@my.tccd.edu**
Phone: **682-583-1683**
Address: **300 Trinity Campus Circle**

Reasons for Report

Scholastic Dishonesty; Distressed Student; Violations of Student Handbook

Involved persons

Tamika Smikle () **tamika.smikle@tccd.edu**
Witness Female

Incident description

This student, Isaiah Smith, has been harrassing the student workers concerning a series of questions that have no relevance to the purpose of his visit on most occasions. On Monday, November 9th, he called to ask a number of things and a few minutes later he physically came into the office to ask where he can receive a permit to express his 2nd amendment, that being, to burn the I.S.I.S flag on the public sidewalk in front of the campus with a group of students. We then directed him to the Police Department because that was not in our jurisdiction.

Pending IR #00000642

Submitted from 64.28.251.129 and routed to Kateeka Harris (Coordinator of Student Support)



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SUCCESS WITHIN REACH.

Incident Reporting Form
Submitted on November 13, 2015 at 11:02:47 am CST

EXHIBIT
12

Type: General Conduct Report
Urgency: Normal

Incident Date: 2015-11-13
Incident Time: 9:55
Incident Location: Trinity River Campus Student Life Center Office

Reported by

Name: Danielle Shawnee Hurrigan
Title: Student Worker Student Life Center
Email: danielle.hurrigan@my.tccd.edu
Phone: 8175151190
Address: 300 Trinity Campus Circle Fort Worth TX 76012

Reasons for Report

Involved persons

Incident description

Student came into the office asking about freedom of speech permits and says he was told to come to our office in order to get them. We directed him to the Campus Police as well as the Fort Worth Police Department in a prior incident and he returned again today. The first time he wanted to burn the ISIS flag today he wanted to only rip it and pass out flyers to students on campus concerning the event. Not sure if he is a harm to anyone or if he is harmless just didn't want anything to happen and these incidents not be on file for reference.

Pending IR #00000641

Submitted from 64.28.253.10 and routed to Kateeka Harris (Coordinator of Student Support)



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SUCCESS WITHIN REACH.

Incident Reporting Form
Submitted on November 16, 2015 at 11:59:07 am CST

12
3-8

Type: **General Conduct Report**
Urgency: **Normal**

Incident Date: **2015-11-09**
Incident Time: **10:20**
Incident Location: **Trinity River Campus TRTR 2004A**

Reported by

Name:	Tamika Smikle
Title:	Senior Office Assistant
Email:	tamika.smikle@tccd.edu
Phone:	5-1190
Address:	300 Trinity Campus Dr.

Reasons for Report

Involved persons

Amber Bernal ()	
Witness	Female
Barbara Solorzano ()	
Witness	Female
Isaiah Smith ()	
Student of concern	Male
Danielle Hurrigan ()	
Witness	Female

Incident description

I was at the copier when I heard Mr. Isaiah came into the office and asked Amber some questions. I recognized his voice from a phone call earlier and looked back behind me as he went to the back of the office and grabbed a snack from the coffee bar. He went back to the front desk and continued his inquiries with Amber. As I walked to the front desk to see if I could be of assistance, Amber asked me about burning on the sidewalk. I asked Mr. Isaiah for clarification by asking if he could repeat the question, it sounded like you asked about burning on the sidewalk correct. He confirmed my question to be correct and explained that he had a first amendment right and was sent here to get a permit from us. I explained we do not have permits located here, I don't think we could assist with this matter. He repeated it was a first amendment right and we (SLC staff) handle this kind of request all the time. I reassured him that this was a unique question to us, we never had a request for this particular request of burnings on campus. I then told him I could check with the police department as they would know more about permits for activities on campus grounds. At first he seemed hesitant when I mentioned contacting the police department, but waited at the front desk. I asked if he could describe the location of the sidewalk area. He mentioned in front of the idea store and to the street. I asked would it be on the same side as the idea store, in front of the idea store or directly across the street. He mentioned in front of the idea store the same side. Shawn mentioned if it is on the sidewalk it should be a city matter and that he would have to contact the city. Barbara came into the office, I excused myself and mentioned I would ask for more information. Once Barbara got to her desk I asked for her assistance with Mr. Isaiah's request of his first amendment act of burning a flag on the sidewalk in front of the idea store. Mr. Isaiah explained his request. Barbara asked for a time frame on when he planned on doing this. He mentioned about a month or two ahead from now, burning of an ISIS flag. Barbara then referred him to Eddie Brassart who handles club and organizations for

assistance, since the location of interest was in front of Idea Store.

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4-8

Pending IR #00000645

Submitted from 64.28.253.139 and routed to Kateeka Harris (Coordinator of Student Support)



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Incident Reporting Form
Submitted on September 30, 2015 at 12:14:56 pm CDT



Type: **General Conduct Report**
Urgency: **Normal**

Incident Date: **2015-09-25**
Incident Time: **11:05 am**
Incident Location: **Trinity River Campus TREF5-East Fork**

Reported by

Name: **Benjamin McKinney**
Title: **Police Officer**
Email: **benjamin.mckinney@tccd.edu**
Phone: **817-515-5500**
Address: **300 Trinity Campus Circle Fort Worth TX 76102**

Reasons for Report

Violations of Student Handbook

Involved persons

Isaiah X Smith (1007475)
Alleged Male

Incident description

See attached Police Report

Attachments

policereport92515.rtf
150900supplementreport92515.rtf

Pending IR #00000542

Submitted from 64.28.251.89 and routed to Kateeka Harris (Coordinator of Student Support)



November 23, 2015

Isaiah Smith
Sent electronically to isaiah.smith367@my.tccd.edu

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Regarding Case Number: 2015018201

Dear Mr. Smith,

Our office received information regarding alleged violations of the Tarrant County College District (TCCD) Student Handbook stemming from an incident on or about November 9, 2015, in or around Trinity River Campus, involving disruption of educational activities. More specifically, you were allegedly harassing the student workers concerning a series of questions that have no relevance to the purpose of his visit on most occasions. Then again on November 13, 2015 you came into the office asking about freedom of speech permits and says he was told to come to our office in order to get them. The specific alleged violations are:

VII. STUDENT DISCIPLINE: 7. Behavior that interrupts or disrupts educational activities

VI. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation

You are required to contact Kateeka Harris, Coordinator of Student Support, by December 1, 2015, to schedule an Educational Conference. The purpose of the Educational Conference is to review the allegations and potential charges, the TCCD Student Handbook, the hearing options, the student conduct process, possible sanctions, and to answer any questions you might have. During the conference, you will be given the opportunity to accept responsibility or not accept responsibility for the violations.

If you have any questions about the Educational Conference please contact Kateeka Harris as soon as possible by calling 817-515-1331. If you should have a documented disability and need accommodation for this meeting, please let me know prior to the meeting so arrangements can be made. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter and look forward to meeting with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Kateeka Harris
Coordinator of Student Support



Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities

During the progression through the student disciplinary system, each responding student (respondent) has certain rights and responsibilities. These are listed below to assist the student in the disciplinary process. This is a general summary of them for the convenience of students involved in the student discipline process. This is not an exhaustive list of all student's rights and responsibilities but is intended to provide a quick guide to standards that should guide a student's decisions and behavior while proceeding through the disciplinary system. Please refer to the Student Handbook for an exhaustive list of all rights and responsibilities.

Student Rights

- **Student has the right to review materials and reports pertaining to him/her that the board or administrator will utilize in the hearing process.** If the student does not receive a copy of the report documenting the incident in question with the letter of notification, the respondent may request a copy of the report and other documents included in the discipline file. Please be aware that the College will permit access only to that part of the record pertaining to the responding student. Requests for copies will take at least 24 hours to process and must be submitted in writing during normal business hours of operation to the office of the individual who signed the letter of notification (in most cases students will receive this statement enclosed with the letter of notification).
- **Student has the right to receive at least ten days written notice before his/her hearing.** Students may choose to waive this right if they would like to expedite their hearing process.
- **Student has the right to submit a written statement outlining their perspective on the discipline case.** Written statements must be submitted at least 1 working day before the hearing to the office of the individual who signed the letter of notification. Written statements may be no longer than five pages double-spaced in length. Any statements deemed inappropriate may be removed/blacked out by the administrator hearing the case or the discipline board advisor.
- **Student has the right to remain silent.** In some cases, especially where a student's alleged discipline may be deemed criminal by an agency outside of TCCD (including but not limited to local police, FBI, immigration, etc.) the student may choose to remain silent and not respond to questions or provide his/her perspective on the situation. If the student chooses to remain silent, the board or administrator will have to make a determination about the student's responsibility for alleged policy violations, and impose sanctions if appropriate, based on written reports and without the benefit of the student's input.
- **Student has the right to provide material witness statements.** If the student has material witnesses who can supply information relevant to the case, with prior permission of the advisor to the discipline board or administrator hearing the case, the student may bring them to their hearing or submit their written statements (not more than five pages in length, double spaced), signed by the witness. The witness may be able to provide a verbal statement at the hearing and respond to questions from the board. If the witness is simply submitting a written statement they must be available for questions from the administrator or discipline hearing board. All witness statements must be submitted to the office of the individual who signed the letter of notification at least one working day before the hearing, during normal business hours. Students wishing to bring witnesses to their hearing must submit a written request at least one working day before the hearing , during normal business hours. Admission of any person to the hearing shall be at the discretion of the discipline hearing board, in consultation with its advisor, or the administrator hearing the case.
- **Student has the right to be accompanied by an "advocate"** (but not one involved in the incident in question) if they so choose, at their own expense. The complainant and/or the respondent each is responsible for presenting his or her own case and, therefore, "advocates" are not permitted to speak to the members of the discipline body nor to participate directly in any hearing before a discipline body;

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8-8

failure to comply will result in the removal of the "advocate." One 5 minute recess may be requested during the course of a hearing if the complainant and/or the respondent wish to consult with their "advocate."

- **Student has the right to discuss the Student Discipline Process and how best to prepare for hearing with any member of the Student Development Services staff who is not directly involved in the hearing itself.**
- **Students have the right to request an audio recording of the hearing, but must make the request at least one day prior to the hearing.**
- **Student has the right to information regarding the appeals process.**

All appeals must be submitted within ten working days of the date of the hearing outcome letter. All appeals must be type written. Appeals must be submitted to the Vice President of Student Development Services who will in turn provide the appeal and all hearing materials to the Campus President for final decision. For a full explanation of the appeals process, please see the Student Handbook.

Student Responsibilities – The following are a list of responsibilities that students must meet during the discipline process. Failure to meet these responsibilities may result in additional discipline charges, sanctioning, or forfeiture of right of appeal.

- **Student must maintain a civil manner.** Student may not yell, threaten, curse, slam doors, pound tables or chairs, disrupt the discipline process, throw any items, or discipline themselves in any other uncivil manner during any part of the discipline process. Students may express anger or frustration in appropriate manners but they do not have the right to act in an abusive or uncivil manner toward discipline officers.
- **If students choose to make a verbal or written statement during their discipline process, they must be honest, complete, and forthright.** Students who make false, dishonest, or misleading statements will be subject to further discipline review.
- **All students have the responsibility to appear on time for their hearing.** Once a hearing is scheduled it may not be rescheduled without showing sufficient reason for the rescheduling. Employment, academic, or social obligations are not valid reasons for rescheduling a hearing.
- **Students have the responsibility to complete their sanctions in a thorough manner and submit them on time.** Any acts of plagiarism will result in further discipline action. Discipline sanctions which are not fully completed by the deadline prescribed in the hearing outcome letter will result in an administrative hold being placed on all student records and the student will not be allowed to conduct business with the College including but not limited to adding/dropping a class, registering or requesting transcripts.



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Incident Reporting Form
Submitted on November 13, 2015 at 11:10:50 am CST

13

Type: **General Conduct Report**
Urgency: **Normal**

Incident Date: **2015-11-09**
Incident Time: **9:50 am**
Incident Location: **Trinity River Campus Student Life Center**

Reported by

Name: **Amber Bernal**
Title: **Student Life Center Student Worker**
Email: **amber.bernal@my.tccd.edu**
Phone: **682-583-1683**
Address: **300 Trinity Campus Circle**

Reasons for Report

Scholastic Dishonesty; Distressed Student; Violations of Student Handbook

Involved persons

Tamika Smikle () tamika.smikle@tccd.edu
Witness Female

Incident description

This student, Isaiah Smith, has been harrassing the student workers concerning a series of questions that have no relevance to the purpose of his visit on most occasions. On Monday, November 9th, he called to ask a number of things and a few minutes later he physically came into the office to ask where he can receive a permit to express his 2nd amendment, that being, to burn the I.S.I.S flag on the public sidewalk in front of the campus with a group of students. We then directed him to the Police Department because that was not in our jurisdiction.

Pending IR #00000642

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the Humanist

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Theoretical Physicist &
2015 HUMANIST OF THE YEAR

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KRAUSS
EXPLORES
HUMANISM, DOUBT
AND OPTIMISM

PLUS

MARCI A. HAMILTON

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WEATHER REPORT
20 Years of Climate Science
Confusion and Delay



Humanist Profile



SOURCE: LICENSED UNDER FAIR USE

"It's all a matter of ideas, and God is just one idea I don't accept. ...I am not going out and be immoral or commit crimes because I don't believe in God. I don't even think about it. It's just that I get tired of Him getting credit for all the things the human race achieves through its own stubborn effort."

—Beneatha Younger, the semi-autobiographical character in Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*

American playwright and activist Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born on May 19, 1930, in Chicago, Illinois, the youngest of four children. Her mother, Nannie Louise, was a teacher and her father, Carl Augustus, worked in real estate. Her parents were major supporters of the Urban League and the NAACP in Chicago. In 1938 they bought a house in what was then an exclusively white neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. Residents tried to impose a racially restrictive covenant to bar the Hansberrys from living there, and the case culminated in a 1940 U.S. Supreme Court decision that found the previous covenant contestable.

Lorraine Hansberry graduated from Chicago's Englewood High School in 1948 and then enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study painting, immediately working to integrate the dormitory where she lived. That same year she also worked on the presidential campaign of Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace.

In 1950 Hansberry moved to New York City to study writing at The New School, and in 1951 moved to Harlem and took a job at the black progressive newspaper *Freedom*, working alongside W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and others. She covered the civil rights movement in the United States, but also wrote about freedom movements in other parts of the world. In 1953 she married Robert Nemiroff, a Jewish songwriter she met at an antidiscrimination rally. Although they divorced in 1964—it's widely thought that Hansberry was a closeted lesbian—they continued to work together closely and Nemiroff was responsible for making her works more widely known after she died.

In the mid-1950s Hansberry wrote a play about a struggling black family living in Chicago (partly based on her family's experiences) called *The Crystal Stair*. It was later renamed *A Raisin in the Sun* (echoing a line from the Langston Hughes poem "Harlem") and opened in 1959 to great success. It was the first Broadway play produced by a black woman and Hansberry was the first black playwright and the youngest American to win a New York Critics' Circle award. The 1961 film version, with Sidney Poitier reprising his theatrical role, was also widely acclaimed.

In an unaired 1959 interview (audio of which is posted at PBS Learning Media), Mike Wallace suggests to Hansberry that the acclaim and awards buzz for her play "may be a sentimental reaction to the fact that you are negro and one of the few negroes ever to write a good Broadway play." Sighing, Hansberry responds: "I image that if I were given the award because they wanted to give it to a negro that it would be the first time in the history of this country that anyone had ever been given anything for being a negro. I don't think it's a very complimentary assessment of an honest piece of work."

An atheist, Hansberry was foremost a passionate civil rights activist. In a 1980 paper in the journal *Melus* titled, "Hansberry's Drama: Commitment amid Complexity," Steven R. Carter recounts her saying that, tactically, blacks "must harass, debate, petition, give money to court struggles, sit-in, lie-down, strike, boycott, sing hymns, pray on steps—and shoot from their windows when the racists come cruising through their communities." In a 1964 town hall debate, Carter describes Hansberry taking issue with white liberals who balked at civil disobedience. While acknowledging the participation of whites in the civil rights struggle, she urged, "stop being a liberal and become an American radical."

Lorraine Hansberry was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1964 and died at the age of thirty-four on January 12, 1965.

HUMANISM

is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. Free of theism and other supernatural beliefs, humanism derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

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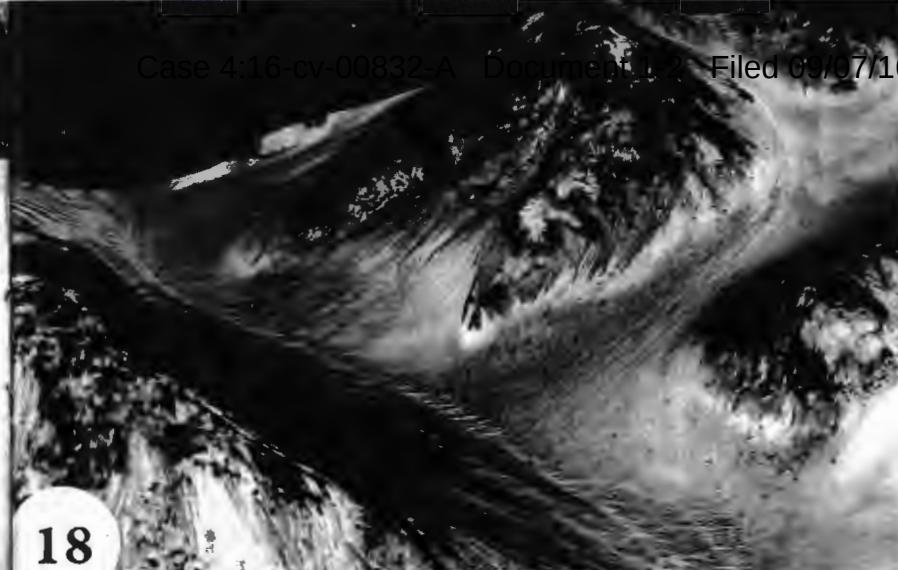
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“Ads have long promised us a better relationship via a product: buy this and you will be loved. But more recently they promise us a relationship with the product: BUY THIS AND IT WILL LOVE YOU. ”

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In addition to attending valuable training sessions, engaging presentations and panels, and banquets with prestigious awardees, humanists who attended the American Humanist Association's 74th Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado, May 7-10 had a lot of fun too. From the "State of Humanism" (top) and the tour of Denver hosted by the Secular Humanist Center (above), to the THRIVE Workshop (below) and the daily meet and greet coffee hour (bottom), conference attendees enjoyed themselves and each other.



EDITOR'S NOTE

BY JENNIFER BARDI

IT WAS NO SMALL TASK FOR Lawrence Krauss to make it to the Grand Hyatt in Denver on May 9 to accept the 2015 Humanist of the Year Award. When he arrived at the pre-banquet cocktail reception he told me he'd been up for forty hours straight, having traveled on four different airplanes from a film shoot 4,000 meters up in the Andes (in Bolivia, I believe). I think he even said that when he got to one airport in the wee hours it was shuttered, and the only sign of life was a dog sleeping up against the front door. Professor Krauss, foremost a theoretical physicist but also a public intellectual and firebrand for science education and humanism, was a lot of fun to talk to. He was also clearly moved by the award and exceedingly generous; forty-plus hours awake and he still he took numerous questions after his speech, posed gamely for photos, and signed books until he was surely ready to drop.

This year was my ninth American Humanist Association conference—the 74th annual—and I can tell you this: AHA conferences are fun. Part professional meeting, part retreat, part family reunion, I almost wonder if it's like a year's worth of church services wrapped into four days. Except that the theology has been replaced with high-potency humanism. AHA annual conferences don't have stated themes, but rather strive to offer a variety of philosophical, scientific, political, and personal talks and training sessions relating to humanism. However, one thread I noticed this year, also examined in the July/August issue on humanism and

race, had to do with the importance of cultivating doubt and embracing uncertainty in order to better understand each other and the world around us.

Lawrence Krauss spoke of the vital necessity of maintaining our ability to doubt in the quest for knowledge and for educating future generations of critical thinkers. Church/state scholar and litigator Marci Hamilton (Religious Liberty Award) delivered a forceful and impassioned speech on the threats to religious liberty posed by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) and its state counterparts. Media critic and filmmaker Jean Kilbourne (Humanist Heroine) illustrated the shocking objectification of women and the sexualization of very young girls in advertising, highlighting some empowering counter-ads that brought many in the audience to tears. And NASA evolutionary biologist-astrobiologist Lynn Rothschild (Isaac Asimov Science Award) gave an inspiring and often humorous talk on her study of the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life—both here and in outer space.

The impressive list of 2015 award recipients also included nineteen-year-old Isaiah Smith (Humanist Pioneer), who, as a high school student in Texas, challenged a number of Establishment Clause violations at his school. He even held up the very Bible from which he'd ripped sections of Leviticus in class in reaction to classmates who were bullying him.

From the National Day of Reason reception Thursday evening to Kelly Carlin's poignant Sunday keynote address, this year's AHA conference pro-



vided a lot of laughs too. Accepting the Humanist Media Award on behalf of *The Onion*, Senior Editor Seena Vali adopted a blowhard persona, declaring his satirical publication the pinnacle of journalistic excellence as he went through one outrageous headline after another. Conference goers expecting good humor were not disappointed, nor will you be after reading his adapted speech herein.

As the 2015 AHA conference was wrapping up, the Pew Research Center released new survey data showing that the number of American nones (those who identify as atheists, agnostics, or as having no particular religious affiliation) continues to rise. As more people leave religion, and as secular millennials age and seek out ethical frameworks, humanism must be poised to offer more opportunities to encounter the kind of fun, enriching, challenging, and supportive community one finds at an AHA conference.

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Letters



"The massacre occurred in a church, and all the victims were Christians. So what should the president have done, told his audience that religion is the opium of the masses?"

— David Quintero
Monrovia, CA

Engaging the Tide

To convince us that liberalism is ascendant, James A. Haught ("The Tide of History Flows Left," S/O 2015) groups liberals with human rights, reduced moral regulation, and secularism. He groups conservatives with slavery, Nazism, Steven Pinker's "human evils," laws based upon biblical morality, and liquor regulation.

Some contradictions result: a core right-wing value is reduced regulation. Temperance regulation was a part of the progressive movement; if Nazi fascism is considered far-right, then communists should be cited as far-left, and society has arguably moved away from communism over the past century; and many religious people of a less-liberal bent have been concerned with human rights.

And as for belief in a trend: millennia ago, many societies were more socially permissive than ours; if *The Chalice and the Blade* is true, women's empowerment today is nothing like it was before 1500 BCE; U.S. tax rates are much lower today than they were fifty years ago; and the last time I heard Kennedy's speech about liberals quoted, it was used to indicate how much more popular liberalism was back then.

I believe that human trends tend to be reactive balances, like pendulums, and that political perspective can't be summed up with a single index.

Tim Athan
Ann Arbor, MI

James A. Haught's article was very encouraging. (To be honest, long before I had ever read anything by Haught or Pinker I had already come to believe that the liberal, enlightened philosophy of life was gradually winning, despite occasional disturbing setbacks.) Haught's statistics on the declining number of people who are religious, especially younger people, are very reassuring, but before we become too elated we should ask ourselves precisely why more and more people are ignoring religion. I suspect that some are doing so for the same reasons they ignore other things: they're simply indifferent. This is precisely why the work of humanists is so essential.

Getting oppressive religion out of people's lives is only half the job. The other half is to make known to the public the humanist message—a lifestyle based on reason, science, and compassion.

Robert Cirillo
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Listen Up

I'm surprised you had so many letters on "Do Black Lives Matter to Humanism?" (J/A 2015). Greta Christina had told us to "shut up and listen."

Ray Sherman
Duarte, CA

Praise the President

A. D. Coleman's "POTUS at the Bully Pulpit" (S/O 2015) is a disappointment to me. While the first half is filled with praise for President Obama's high moral stature and his eulogy for Rev. Pinckney, the second half criticizes him as a political opportunist for his "healing sermonizing."

Think about it: the massacre occurred in a church, and all the victims were Christians. So what should the president have done, told his audience that religion is the opium of the masses?

Coleman labels Obama as a pragmatist who "knows full well that you can't get elected to...high office without professing belief in Judeo Christian mythology." Has he forgotten that Obama doesn't have to play to the crowds to get re-elected? The president displayed genuine compassion for those who grieved. I praise him for that, and for comforting all of us as a nation with the embrace of his sincere emotion—not "artful theater" as Coleman derisively labels it.

David Quintero
Monrovia, CA

CORRECTION: In "Winning the Right to Say 'I Do!'" (S/O 2015), interviewer Marty Bankson's name was misspelled ("Blankson") in his byline. We regret the error.

Letters to the editor should be sent to editor@thehumanist.org or mailed to Editor, the Humanist, 1777 T St. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

The Decline of the Western Ethnic State

by Lawrence Davidson

If you were transported back to Europe in 1900 and you asked educated citizens to describe the ideal political arrangement, what they would most certainly outline to you is a homogeneous nation-state: France for the French, Germany for the Germans, Italy for the Italians, and the like. They would note exceptions but describe them as unstable. For instance, at this time the Austro-Hungarian Empire was, ethnically, a very diverse place, but it was politically restless. Come World War I, ethnic desires for self-rule and independence would help tear this European-centered multi-national empire apart. In truth, even those states that fancied themselves ethnically unified were made up of many regional outlooks and dialects, but the friction these caused was usu-

ally minor enough to allow the ideal of homogeneity to prevail. The ethnically unified nation-state was almost everyone's "ideal state."

This standard of homogeneity started to break down after World War II. After this war the foreign empires run by many of Europe's homogeneous states were in retreat and in their wake came a slew of new nations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Simultaneously, the impact of the end of empire on the European nations was to have their own homogeneous status eroded. For instance, when Great Britain set up the Commonwealth as a substitute for empire it allowed freer immigration into England for Commonwealth citizens. The result was an influx of people of color from former British colonies in Africa, India-Pakistan, and

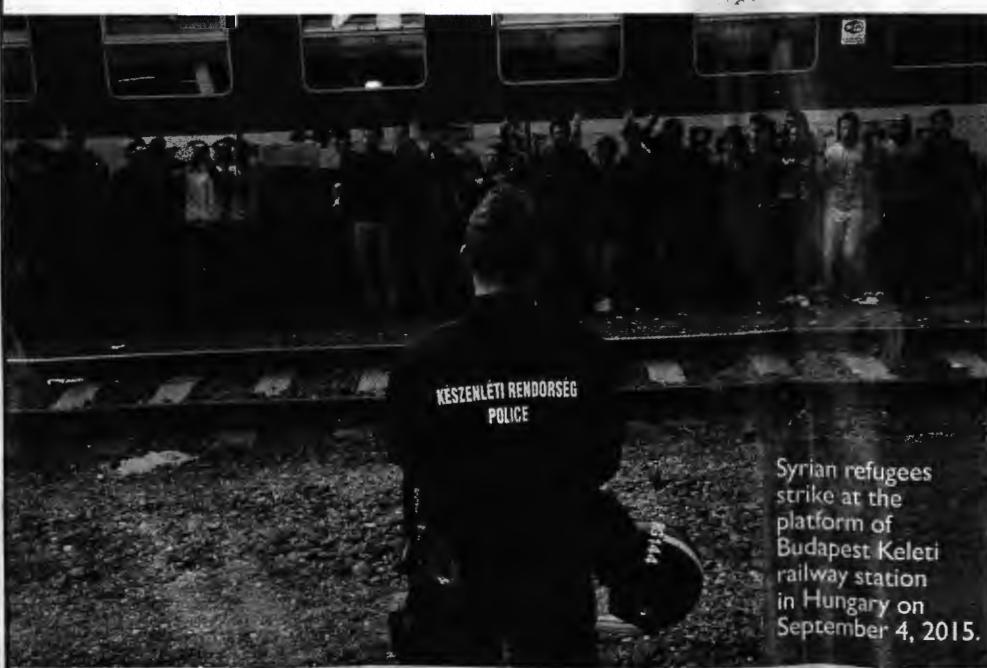
the Caribbean. A similar thing happened as the French empire crumbled. With its demise many North Africans as well as Vietnamese Catholics went to France. Later, Turks would go to Germany, a preference that reflected the close relations between Berlin and the defunct Ottoman Empire. Then came the formation of the European Union (EU) in 1993, which facilitated the flow of labor across European borders. Now citizens of one EU state could go and work in any other member state.

In other words, the twenty or thirty years following World War II marked the beginning of the end of the Western homogeneous state.

Now we may be witnessing the final stage of that demise. The present refugee crisis resulting from wars raging in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and other places in the Middle East, has set in motion millions of displaced people. Many of these refugees are heading for Europe.

While most of the European Union leaders initially showed some willingness to take in substantial numbers of refugees, strong resistance from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia caused a pause in the effort. This was a predictable moment. All established populations, even relatively diverse ones, fear that their cultural norms and economic advantages will be threatened by large waves of new immigrants. At the extreme, one finds ideologically and religiously defined nations such as the Arab Gulf states and the allegedly westernized Israel (itself a product of an overwhelming refugee invasion of Palestine) refusing to take in any of the present refugees. Even in a country such as the United States, which is historically built upon the inflow of diverse populations, it is politically difficult to open borders to new refugees in need. Announcing an initial willingness to allow an embar-

PHOTO: MITYSLAV CHERNOV (CC BY-SA 4.0)



Syrian refugees strike at the platform of Budapest Keleti railway station in Hungary on September 4, 2015.

rassingly small number of 10,000 refugees to enter, Washington has increased that to 100,000 between now and 2017.

Getting back to the European scene, the pressure building on the borders resulted in an EU decision, allegedly binding on all its twenty-eight member states, to speed up the intake screening process for refugees and distribute the accepted numbers across the EU countries. How many will ultimately be allowed into Europe is still unclear. If the leaders of Europe are smart about it they will go beyond merely symbolic numbers. If they are not, then there will be concentration camps on their borders and eventual violence that will mark a dark period in their supposed civilized histories. Controlled or not, in the end many of the refugees will probably find a way in.

There is ironic justice in this prospect. After all, the wars that have uprooted so many were triggered by Western intervention in the Middle East. One can thank George W. Bush and his neoconservative colleagues (along with British allies) for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. That action set loose the forces that have subsequently displaced the people who make up the bulk of today's refugees. Add to this the 2011 NATO intervention in the civil war in Libya, in which France, Italy, and the United States led the way. This action has prolonged the anarchy in that country and is one of the reasons that 300,000 people attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea in the direction of Europe in 2015 alone. A reported 2,500 of them died in the attempt.

It is a testimony to the fact that the average citizen has little knowledge and less interest in their nation's foreign policies that few in Europe and the U.S. recognize, much less acknowledge, responsibility for the present disaster.

The population in western and central Europe has been shifting in the

As a society we must better cultivate the empathy that helps people learn that we are one world of one people. Nothing—not race, not faith, not how

**-AHA Executive Director
ROY SPECKHARDT, in a statement responding to the October 1 mass shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon.**

people think or how they love—can be grounds for setting aside the human rights and dignity each one of us deserves.”



direction of diversity for the last seventy years, and that of the United States more or less consistently since the nation's founding. Along with diversity comes a complementary, if perhaps more gradual, shift in culture.

Opposing this historical trend is the fact that anti-immigrant resistance among established national populations is almost a default position. However, it's like spitting into the wind. In the long term, the evolution of populations moves from homogeneity to diversity. It is just a matter of how long the process takes.

Thus, from every angle, ethical as well as historical, the way to approach the present refugee crisis is to allow, in a controlled but adequately responsive way, the inflow of those now run-

ning from the ravages of invasion and civil war.

In so doing we should accept the demise of the homogeneous state. Whether it's Burma, France, Germany, Hungary, or Israel, the concept is historically untenable and neither raises nor even maintains our civilizational standards. Rather it grinds them down into the dust of an inhumane xenophobia. ■

Lawrence Davidson is professor emeritus of history at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. He is the author of numerous books and articles on topics ranging from U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East to the history of Islamic fundamentalism. He also blogs at www.totheponitanalyses.com.

GIVEN the EVIDENCE

ANOTHER REASON NOT TO GET HOOKED ON PAINKILLERS

Researchers at the University of Vienna are studying the neurobiological mechanisms of empathy by manipulating self-experienced pain.

"Only this trick enabled us to conclude with higher certainty that empathy relies on simulation," explains Claus Lamm, who leads the study. In other words, the less physical pain we experience ourselves, the less empathy we have for others' pain. So forget merely imagining what it's like to be in someone else's shoes—put 'em on, lace them tight, and walk a good mile.

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ELVIS-ATHEIST NEXUS?

Conspiracy theorists are often thought of as folks who see sinister plans at every turn, think things are rigged or set in a way that others don't realize. (The government added AIDS to support the black and gay community, the Apollo moon landing was faked, etc.)



Seeing intention and design in things would seem to be the purview more commonly of true believers and the "everything happens for a reason" crowd. However, research published in *Psychological Science* in October found that people given to conspiracist thinking were just as able to accept randomness (gauged by their assessments of random number strings) as those who rejected conspiracy theories.

Does this mean atheists are just as likely to believe Elvis never really left the building?

HEY YOU, GET OFF MY MICROBIAL CLOUD

Did you know that individuals release their own personalized microbial cloud? Research findings out of the University of Oregon and published in September in the open-access peer-reviewed journal *PeerJ* demonstrated just that. Researchers sequenced microbes from the air surrounding eleven people in a sanitized chamber and

found they could identify most of those who had sat alone in the chamber within four hours just by the unique combinations of bacteria in the air.

It's thought that the findings might better inform studies on how infectious diseases spread in buildings, and may even have forensic applications, such as determining a person's prior location. **And for those non-smartphone tapping, non-Facebook posting privacy lovers, remaining anonymous could get that much harder.**



IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO LEARN YOUR TEACHER ISN'T ALWAYS RIGHT

Are we living in the 21st century? A pre-K teacher at Oakes Elementary School in Okemah, Oklahoma, doesn't seem to be. When she spotted one of her four-year-old students writing with his left hand she instructed him to use his right and later sent a letter to his mother in which the teacher called left-handedness "unlucky," "evil," and "sinister."

"There are numerous instances of left-handedness being associated with wickedness. For example, the devil is often portrayed as left-handed, and people throw salt over their left shoulder to ward off the evil spirits that dwell there," the note said. The boy's mother complained to the school, but after no action was taken against the teacher she had her son moved to a different class. Considering the company her son keeps with fellow lefties Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, John Stewart, Nicole Kidman, Spike Lee, Paul McCartney, Babe Ruth, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Pablo Picasso, Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Leonardo Da Vinci (not to mention the teacher's husband!) that seems like the smart thing to do.

Up Front

Concerning Our Failure to Appreciate the Weather

by Peter Miesler

Twenty years ago I came across a cartoon by Mike Keefe that captured an attitude I had found all too pervasive among my fellow Americans: the attitude of entitlement and detached disregard for understanding how our global climate system operates.

It inspired me to write an essay describing my understanding of our planet's climate system, and it was published in the November/December 1995 issue of the *Humanist*. Rereading it, I notice some minor errors but the basic story remains as accurate today as it was back then. Since anniversaries are a good time to reflect on history and how far we've come (or not), I think it's worth recalling where our understanding of climate change was twenty years ago.

Though there were fewer media outlets back then, they were more objective and for the most part offered straightforward climate science information. After all, it's not that tough a story to summarize, even if the details get devilishly difficult.

By '95 we had learned that weather is the product of climate conditions and that Earth's climate conditions fluctuated. We knew that CO₂ and other greenhouse gases were a major regulator of those fluctuations.

At the same time we were also being forced to confront the reality that it was our own burning of fossil fuels and the machines behind our modern marvels and lavish lifestyles that were increasingly belching "gaseous insulation" into our atmosphere.

Back then we were thinking about the Keeling Curve, the mother of all CO₂ concentration graphs. Consider for a moment that before the indus-

trial revolution our global climate system had its CO₂ regulator slowly fluctuating between about 180 ppm (parts per million) to 280 ppm. And I mean slowly, taking tens of thousands of years to go from peak to trough (± 100 ppm), with profound changes from ice ages to temperate periods.

Around 1850 this gaseous regulator was set at the prehistoric peak of ± 280 ppm, but by 1995 this greenhouse gas regulator increased 80 clicks, up to 360 ppm. It has taken only twenty years to ratchet up another forty clicks and bust through 400 ppm, which is setting up the earth for a hothouse future.

This added atmospheric insulation warms our climate system. Simple undeniable physics! This warming then forces the troposphere to hold more moisture.

I believe cartoonist Keefe's storm clouds were a reminder of the increas-

ing tempo of "rogue" weather events we had been witnessing. For instance, in the United States we had the great 1980 drought and heat wave that killed thousands; the wild 1982-83 season, with its El Niño-driven storms and floods; an ugly drought in Australia; and some crazy cyclone behavior in the Pacific: 1988 brought another massive and costly drought and heat wave, 1991 saw the Oakland Hills firestorm, and in 1992 category-five Hurricane Andrew hit the Atlantic, category four Iniki struck Hawaii, and the Pacific Ocean had its most powerful cyclone season in recorded history. The year ended with the colossal Nor'easter of '92. Since dubbed "The Perfect Storm," it was a reminder for all who were paying attention that global weather systems interact with each other and their cumulative energy is capable of extraordinary outbursts. For the next



MIKE KEEFE'S CARTOON REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CARTOONIST.

Up Front

three years an amazing four extreme weather calamities hit the United States annually.

I like to think Keeffe was mocking the studied avoidance found in growing numbers of citizens. The science was becoming clearer as to our impact on climate, with headlines of these events including phrases such as "wake up call." Indeed, we were waking up to the fact that it was our own collective behavior and expectations driving this global problem; the escalating consumption we'd fallen in love with was the cancer that would continue raising our planet's temperature. However, this dawning realization created a profound cognitive dissonance.

The stark historic reality was this: power down or radically alter our planet's global climate system and the biosphere upon which we all depend. Yes, that meant consuming less and in smarter ways. It also meant burning less fossil fuels and making fewer babies.

Republican and libertarian players took advantage of the power of cognitive dissonance and created a network of right-wing think tanks and PR fronts. With hindsight it's easy to see their long-term, two-pronged approach. First, there was the enlisting and cultivating of certain profit-focused evangelical interests to foster faith-based communities that were emotionally hostile towards evidence-based learning and rational constructive discourse. The other depended on orchestrating dirty tricks, creating scandals, and lying about the scientific evidence, along with misrepresentation of and personal attacks against scientists themselves.



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Instead of promoting curiosity or interest in learning about what was happening to our planet, they created an alternate universe of faux science that conformed to their ideology and to their political and business objectives. To hell with understanding observations and facts regarding Earth. The "merchants of doubt," to borrow a phrase from Naomi Oreskes, became masters of deception and spin. For instance, after a record-smashing hot 1998, global surface temperatures plateaued and didn't rise as fast as some expected.

By 2006 the spin masters started crying "no global warming!" with such insistence and wily finesse that they even got the scientific community all atwitter about an imaginary "global warming hiatus."

CLASSIC HUMANIST

25
years ago...



PHOTO BY ANONYMOUS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The level of frustration and cynicism from government officials is disturbing. It is also news. It's good, honest reporting—the kind of tough questioning we're supposed to do to bring important issues to the public's attention. ...But as we in journalism ask these tough questions, honesty demands that we also face some facts about ourselves. One of those facts is that, when it comes to leadership, we aren't in a very good position to be casting stones. I'm reminded of the cartoon showing a politician on the stump saying, "If it's demonstrated to me that the American public wants leadership, then, by God, I'll give them leadership." Journalists *should* denounce government by public opinion polls. But we also

ought to acknowledge that our own coverage of the news is more and more driven by this same kind of market research. "What kind news are you most interested in hearing? Are you more interested in medicine, consumer affairs, the Trumps, or Tiananmen Square?" The networks have already gotten into the habit of screening news programs for "focus groups" in order to find out which stories are the most popular. Not which stories are the most *important*—which are the most popular. And focus groups have long been used by many newspapers as well.

—Dan Rather, "Journalism and the Public Trust," November/December 1990

It seemed like everyone forgot the unavoidable basics: It's our planet's atmospheric insulation doing the heavy lifting on this global warming thing.

The troposphere (Earth's lowest layer of atmosphere) is huge and complex; heat is absorbed and moved around in myriad ways so it's no surprise that scientists don't have a perfect inventory of where every joule of heat is going. What matters is how atmospheric greenhouse gases are retaining heat, and that process scientists do understand—thoroughly. It doesn't turn on and off; the "global warming hiatus" was an illusion from day one.

The question everyone should have been asking was: "Where did the surface heat go?" The answer turns out to be a combination of oceans and difficulties in deducing the "average" global surface temperature in the first place.

Another PR ringer is the soothing mantra that held some rational justification in the 1960s and '70s, perhaps even in the '80s, but has become increasingly disconnected from reality: "No single storm is proof of global warming." The success of this bit of tactical misdirection has been astonishing and far-reaching. Even serious scientists glommed onto it. But it ignores the basic physical reality that weather is the tool of our climate and climate is dependent on the composition of the atmosphere.

Climate is a heat and moisture distribution engine. Weather is the physical tool that does the work of distributing the sun's heat and hot moisture-laden air masses that our equatorial belt is constantly churning out. It follows that no weather event is independent of the overarching

warming of our weather-making engine. So, what's up with the wishful avoidance?

Flash forward to 2015 and the earth is experiencing its warmest year in recorded history. Extreme weather events continue breaking records, yet business leaders, their politicians, and their faithful continue to ignore everything climate scientists and observations have to teach them about our one and only planet.

We face a make-or-break challenge: Will we grow up and get serious about our impacts upon this one and only, finite home of ours? Will our politicians and business leaders muster the courage to take the threats to civilization seriously?

There are many who see this as the people's project. Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL), for example, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group that trains and supports volunteers to engage elected officials, the media, and the public on the need to act to mitigate climate change. They are gearing up for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Paris and need more support. If you care about the health of our planet, here's your chance to step up and be a global citizen; check out CCL's "Pathway to Paris" website and lend your support. H

Peter Miesler writes from near Durango, Colorado, and maintains the blog Whatsupwiththatwatts.blogspot.com, challenging climate science contrarians to debate.

50 years ago...



David Gold's letter about the lack of articles on nudism raises some interesting questions which may turn out to have very dull answers. First, a cursory review of nudist magazines published over the last five years indicates a preoccupation with humanism on the part of nudists, at least this goes for nudist writers and editors. My own contact with organized nudism leads me to believe that about 20 percent of them are practicing humanists and about one percent are card-carrying AHA'ers. On the other hand all humanists are to some extent practicing nudists. Some of us just take our baths in the nude, some of us sleep raw,

and others of us do as much of our daily living in the nude as our jobs and the law permit. Nudity to the humanist is not an "ism" but rather is an aspect of daily living worthy of study as less important than sex but more important than badminton. Surely, Mr. Gold, if we humanists can survive on one *wishy-washy* issue [of the *Humanist*] on sex since 1955 we can wait another ten years for a meaningful article on nudism!

—Emerson Symonds, "Reader's Forum," November/December, 1965

PHOTO BY JOCHEN SCHÖNEDER

HUMANISM AND OPT



“Education at its heart

UP MISM LAWRENCE KRAUSS

2015 HUMANIST OF THE YEAR

s inseparable from teaching doubt.”

LAWRENCE KRAUSS has had an extensive and impressive career in theoretical physics. He received undergraduate degrees in mathematics and physics at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, his PhD in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and he has taught at Yale and Case Western Reserve University. Krauss is currently Foundation Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration and Physics Department at Arizona State University, where he also directs the Origins Project.

Hailed by *Scientific American* as one of the rare scientific public intellectuals, Krauss is a regular contributor to publications like *The New Yorker* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and he has authored or co-authored over three hundred scientific papers. He co-starred beside Richard Dawkins in the 2013 documentary, *The Unbelievers*, and appeared in the Discovery Channel's *How the Universe Works*. Krauss is the author of ten popular books, including the international bestseller *The Physics of Star Trek* (1995) and the *New York Times* bestseller, *A Universe from Nothing* (2012). Throughout his work he has been a staunch advocate for science education, a firebrand for the cause of scientific humanism, and an active defender of the freethought movement.

Lawrence Krauss has been honored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and has received numerous prestigious awards and accolades. The following is adapted from his speech in acceptance of the Humanist of the Year award, delivered at the American Humanist Association's annual conference in Denver, Colorado, on Saturday, May 9, 2015.

“Permit us to question—to doubt, that’s all—and not to be sure.... It is our responsibility...to teach how doubt is not to be feared but welcomed and discussed, and to demand this freedom as our duty to all coming generations.”

—RICHARD FEYNMAN

BEFORE I begin I would like to thank the American Humanist Association for this remarkable award. The list of past awardees includes many intellectual heroes of mine, and to join that list is truly one of the greatest honors of my life. Moreover, the context of this award, humanism, means a great deal to me, because humanism characterizes the spirit that I have tried to use as a guide in my personal, professional, and public activities.

That spirit, to me, can be summed up as follows: It is up to us determine the nature of the way in which we carry out our lives, using a combination of reason, intelligence, and compassion. No one is taking care of us but us. Bad decisions produce bad consequences, and we must take responsibil-



“ Non-overlapping magisteria has a nice ring to it. The problem is that there are many religious claims that not only “overlap” with empirical data but are incompatible with it.

ity for them, and, if possible, take actions to mediate or alleviate them. Whether or not the future for our children is better than the past is up to us.

We are, of course, constrained in our actions by the cumulative historical impact of ignorance and greed and the struggle for power, often accentuated by governments or churches whose interests may lie in permeating myths that build support for the status quo and squelch calls for change. As a result, if we want to change the future for the better we must be prepared to encounter numerous obstacles. But I am a theoretical physicist trained to worry about possibilities, not practicalities. Moreover, I would argue that if we don't first imagine a possible future, we can never implement the practical steps that might make it a reality.

So tonight, I want to suggest that humanism offers the world one of the most important drivers of change that can improve our future, and in so doing I may express an optimism that seems naïve. Nevertheless I am emboldened by the recent experience in this country regarding gay marriage. In spite of what some of the media might suggest,

and what middle-aged senators may say, the issue of gay marriage is a done deal. Why? If you speak to a young person my daughter's age, they don't understand what the problem is. Almost all of them have friends who are gay, or they know gay couples and they cannot understand what the previous generation was concerned about. If the public and legal debate isn't over right now, it soon will be. When the next generation grows old enough to vote, to judge, to represent the media, and to run for office the debate will surely be over.

This would have been unheard of a generation ago—indeed, merely a decade ago. How could change happen so quickly?

Max Planck once said that science advances one funeral at a time. And what he meant was that old theories may never die, but old theorists do, and when they do, they take their theories with them. A new generation is always more comfortable dispensing with old ideas than are their predecessors.

So, I want to argue here that it is possible to imagine a future without the tyranny of religious myth and super-

stitution, and its chokehold on supposed morality. And it is possible to imagine such a future soon. We are never more than a generation away from change. The key is reaching the next generation when they are young.

There has happily been a great deal of discussion of late about the importance of encouraging children, particularly young girls, to go into careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (so-called STEM subjects). From an economic perspective, it is good for the country, because in the twenty-first century those countries without a workforce with STEM skills will quickly fall behind the curve. It is good for the world, because the challenges of the twenty-first century, from global warming to energy production and storage, will require technological innovation as well as institutional changes at the global level. And it is good for girls and young women, because these careers will help empower them, raise many out of potential poverty, and free them from subjugation by men.

But exposing children to science is far more than merely providing them with Lego sets and playing “sink or float.” Moreover, providing a set of facts is not the primary purpose of education. Its primary purpose is teaching how to distinguish between fact and fantasy, along with how to derive facts by questioning and testing, and where to go to access reliable data.

The most important goal in educating our children should be to encourage them to question everything, to not be satisfied with unsubstantiated claims, and to be skeptical of *a priori* beliefs, either their own, their parents’, or their teachers’. Encouraging skeptical thinking in this way, as well as directing a process by which questions may be answered—the process of empirical investigation followed by logical reasoning—helps create lifelong learners and citizens who can responsibly address the demands of a democratic society.

And there is overwhelming evidence that one of the key collateral benefits of a more scientifically literate populace is that the seeds of religious doubt are thereby planted among the next generation.

The late Christopher Hitchens once said that religion poisons everything. While there is ample room to debate Hitchens’ bold statement, even people who take a less extreme view must admit that in the current climate religion is poisoning the political process in many places throughout the world.

The brutal terrorism of ISIS is merely one extreme. In this country numerous Republicans are now tripping over themselves to move to the right of the religious right—with the recent freshman class of the U.S. House reported to include a former Navy Seal who claims Hillary Clinton is the Antichrist, another who claims recent “blood moons” are fulfilling biblical prophecies, and another who proposed reclassifying single parenthood as child abuse.

The purpose of education may not be to destroy religious belief, but surely, as Richard Feynman alluded to in the

quote I opened with, its purpose is to encourage doubt. In that arena we are sorely falling short.

At least one significant factor arises from the unwillingness, enforced by terror in much of the Middle East and political correctness in the United States, to openly ridicule in the public arena patently false and nonsensical claims, as long as they are religious claims.

This is particularly important in the current climate associated with satire of the type represented by *Charlie Hebdo*, because very few Americans support openly questioning or satirizing religious beliefs, even though they would be loathe to stifle questioning, debate, or even ridicule in almost any other area in the public arena. In a Pew survey published in May of last year, the number-one negative trait listed for possible presidential candidates by adults in the United States was atheism. Some 53 percent indicated that they would be less likely to vote for an atheist for president, more than would be similarly inclined if the potential candidate had never held public office, had had an extramarital affair, or were gay or lesbian.

Avoiding confrontations with religion is not restricted to politics. Many scientists and teachers do it, too. Recent studies—including a comprehensive national survey in 2007 by researchers at Penn State University—show that up to 60 percent of high school biology teachers shy away from adequately teaching evolution as a unifying principle of biology. They don’t want to risk potential controversy by offending religious sensibilities. Instead, many resort to the idea, advocated by the late Stephen Jay Gould, that science and religion are “non-overlapping magisteria”—separate traditions of thinking that need not contradict one another.

Those in the public sphere who have openly questioned the need for God, or the consistency of religious doctrine with empirical evidence, are most often dismissed as strident. Sadly, many of those who express such a reaction are not religious fundamentalists but fellow scientists. The claim is made—indeed a claim I myself used to make—that if scientists openly question the existence of God then we will alienate those who already view science as the enemy of faith, further hardening their stand against the teaching of concepts like evolution, the Big Bang, or even climate change and making it more difficult to break down barriers to education.

But by arguing in public (in many cases against their own internal views) that science presents no challenge to religious belief, my colleagues are being disingenuous. While science cannot falsify the vague postulate that there may be purpose to the universe, nevertheless the specific claims of the scriptures are, in many cases, empirically falsifiable, and those that are have been falsified.

“Non-overlapping magisteria” has a nice ring to it. The problem is that there are many religious claims that not only “overlap” with empirical data but are incompatible with it. As a scientist who also spends a fair amount of time in the public arena, if I am asked if our understanding of the

Big Bang conflicts with the idea of a six-thousand-year-old universe, I face a choice: I can betray my scientific values or encourage that person to doubt his or her own beliefs.

Scientists who argue that we shouldn't focus on these embarrassing contradictions are misrepresenting the key facet of science that Feynman so extolled. Science, at its basis, encourages open expressions of doubt, and progress often occurs by disproving the accepted wisdom of the previous generation. It also seems inconsistent to have no problem ridiculing the claims of astrology, even though a significant fraction of the public believes these claims, while arguing that it hurts the cause of science to suggest that various religious tenets are poorly founded in reality.

Without demeaning the thoughtful faithful, we shouldn't shy away from publicly accepting that many of the specific claims of the sacred books of the world's major religions are not valid. One need not turn to the numerous contradictions with known physics and cosmology—after all, many of these books were written before we knew the earth orbited the sun. There are simpler falsehoods, from the existence of domesticated camels in the time of Abraham, to Muhammad's famous night journey to a mosque in Jerusalem in spite of the fact that there were no mosques in Jerusalem at the time, to the fact that one of

the central holy books of the Mormon faith—an Egyptian papyrus translated into the book of Abraham—is now known to merely describe the burial rites for Ra.

There may be places in the world where one risks decapitation for questioning certain religious claims, but in a rational world it is hard to argue that questioning these, or a host of others of dubious repute, should be viewed as inappropriate. Education at its heart is inseparable from teaching doubt.

It is good to be skeptical, especially about ideas you learn from perceived authority figures. Recent studies even suggest that being taught to doubt at a young age could make people better lifelong learners. That, in turn, means that doubters—people who base their views on evidence, rather than faith—are likely to be better citizens.

Last year, writing in the *New York Times*, the political scientist Brendan Nyhan explained how “identity often trumps the facts.” We would rather reject evidence than change our sense of who we are. Knowledge is comparatively helpless against identity: as you grow better informed about the issues, you just get better at selectively using evidence to reinforce your pre-existing commitments. A 2014 Yale Law School study, for example, demonstrated that the divergence between religious and nonreligious peoples’ views on evolution actually grows wider among those who are familiar with math and science. Describing Nyhan’s work in the *New Yorker*, Maria Konnikova summarized his findings by writing that “it’s only after ideology is put to the side” that the facts become “decoupled from notions of self-perception.” If we want to raise citizens who are better at making evidence-based judgments, we need to start early, making skepticism and doubt part of the experience that shapes their identities from a young age.

Meanwhile, earlier this year, an AP-GfK poll revealed that less than a third of Americans are willing to express confidence in the reality of human-induced climate change, evolution, the age of the earth, and the existence of the Big Bang. Among those surveyed, there was a direct correlation between religious conviction and an unwillingness to accept the results of empirical scientific investigation. Religious beliefs vary widely, of course—not all faiths, or all faithful people, are the same. But it seems fair to say that, on average, religious faith appears to be an obstacle to understanding the world.

And it is an obstacle that may begin early. Last summer a new study published in the journal *Cognitive Science* claimed to find a significant difference in the ability of children as young as five and six years old to distinguish fact from fantasy, depending upon their past exposure to religious education, in church or parochial school. The children with religious training (coming from many different religious backgrounds) were less able to judge that characters in fantasy stories were fictional rather than real compared to children with no such exposure. Unfortunately, the methodology of the study was badly flawed, but

“By planting the seeds of doubt, education offers the best opportunity to immunize children against the intellectual virus that is associated with dogma and superstition in the world today.”



“A new generation is always more comfortable dispensing with old ideas than are their predecessors.

I suspect a good scientific study would be likely to demonstrate something similar, and I encourage better scholars to carry out such studies.

By planting the seeds of doubt, education offers the best opportunity to immunize children against the intellectual virus that is associated with dogma and superstition in the world today.

Of course, science class isn't the only place where students can learn to be skeptical. A provocative novel that presents a completely foreign worldview, or a history lesson exploring the vastly different mores of the past, can push you to skeptically reassess your inherited view of the universe. But science is a place where such confrontation is explicit and accessible. It didn't take more than a simple experiment for Galileo to overturn the wisdom of Aristotle. Informed doubt is the very essence of science.

Some teachers shy away from confronting religious beliefs, because they worry that planting the seeds of doubt will cause some students to question or abandon their own faith or the faith of their parents. But is that really such a bad thing? It offers some young people the chance to escape the guilt imposed upon them simply for questioning what they're told. Recently I received an e-mail from a twenty-seven-year-old man who is now studying in the United States after growing up in Saudi Arabia.

His father was executed by family members after converting to Christianity. He says that it's learning about science that has finally liberated him from the specter of religious fundamentalism. The same week, I received an e-mail from a young man who lives in Indiana; he feels isolated and damaged because of the reaction of his friends and family to his rejection of religion and his love of science. I get e-mails like this regularly. We owe it to these young people to help them feel, as another young letter-writer put it, that "I'm not the only one who has these thoughts."

Is it naïve to imagine we can overcome centuries of religious intransigence in a single generation through education? Maybe. But as Nelson Mandela said about going from prisoner to president in the span of a generation, "It always seems impossible until it's done." The stakes are too high not to try, as Feynman warned us a generation ago:

It is our responsibility to leave the men of the future with a free hand. In the impetuous youth of humanity, we can make grave errors that can stunt our growth for a long time. This we will do if we, so young and ignorant, say we have the answers now, if we suppress all discussion, all criticism, saying, "This is it, boys! Man is saved!" Thus we can doom man for a long time to the chains of authority, confined to the limits of our present imagination. H

Battlestar Galapagos: Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been, and Are We Alone?

BY LYNN ROTHSCHILD, 2015 ISAAC ASIMOV SCIENCE AWARD

TO SAY THAT I WAS STUNNED upon learning that I would receive the Isaac Asimov Science Award from the American Humanist Association is somewhat of an understatement. After all, I'm a microbiologist—the family joke is that I always lose interest at the two-cell stage—so what I'm doing at a meeting with humans, I have no idea. In this way my being here is very much like when one travels abroad to really understand what your own home is like. And so I thought I'd talk a little bit about humanity's place in the cosmos.

To start with, I think we really have to understand how we, as humans, got to this stage of understanding. I'd like to think that we've gone through several major scientific revolutions. Before Nicolaus Copernicus (what I call B.C.), people understood the earth as something very different; it wasn't part of the heavens and it wasn't part of the natural world. And what Copernicus did, in essence, was to put the

earth into the natural world as we became the third rock from the sun. Then you get to someone like René Descartes, and some of his buddies, who realized that our sun itself was not necessarily special—that there were other suns out there, stars just like our own.

So, at that point you had the physical world as part of the natural world. You had the earth in its place, and you had the stars in perspective. But oddly enough, the biological world was still considered something special. And then came the Darwinian revolution, and the biological world too became part of the natural world. But I would like to submit to you that that's not the end of the revolutions, that the next stage—which may turn out to be the end, maybe not—is what I like to think of as the astrobiology revolution. This is today's great scientific revolution because before, we were very self-centered. (Where is the earth? What does our sun mean? What does life on Earth

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The following is adapted from her speech in acceptance of the 2015 Isaac Asimov Science Award from the American Humanist Association at its annual conference in Denver, Colorado.



mean?) But now we need to step back and have a much greater perspective. What is the meaning in the perspective of the cosmos?

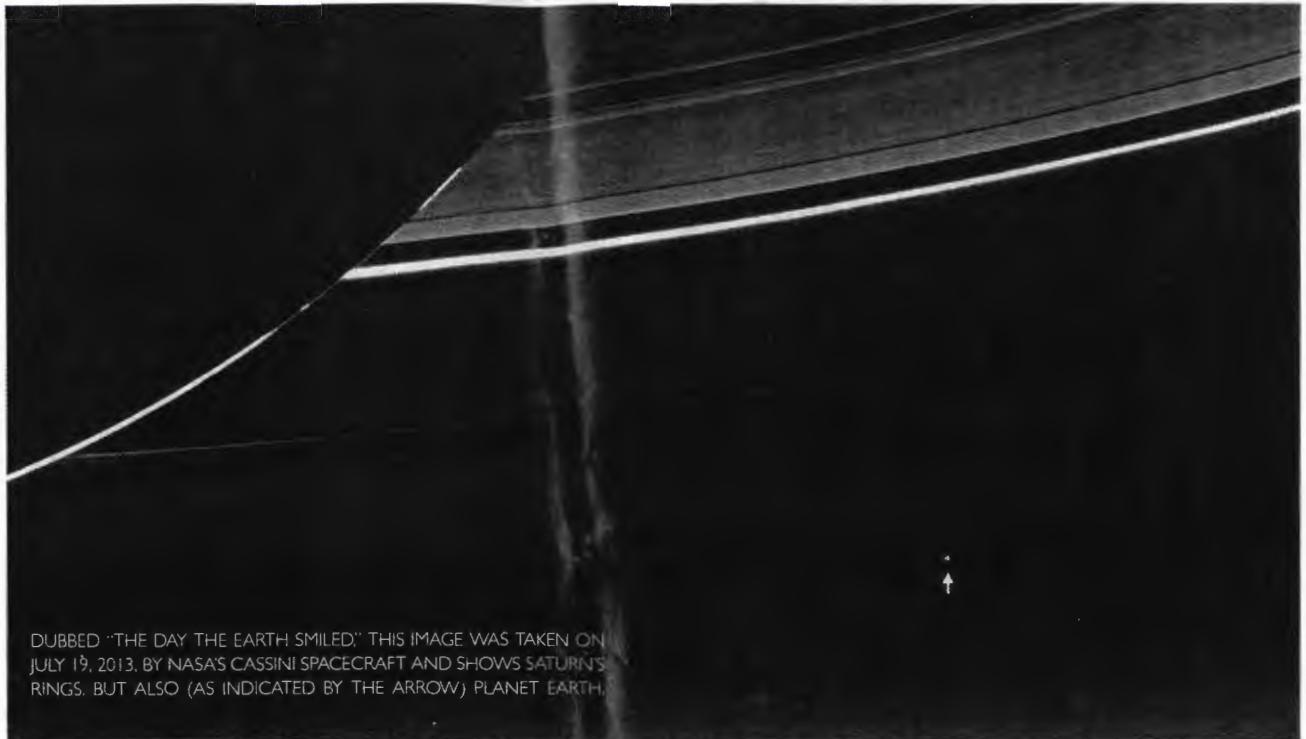
You can talk about astrobiology in terms of three big questions. First: Where do humans come from? Put another way, where does life come from? How do you end up with the sort of chemicals that can form life? Going back from there, how do you even have a habitable body, a solar system? All the way back to the Big Bang, it's really evolution writ large.

The flip side is the second big question in astrobiology: Where are we going? Just because we're here on planet Earth doesn't mean that the sun has stopped burning. It doesn't mean that the moon has stopped receding from our planet at about four centimeters a year (we know from the Apollo missions that it is). Things are going to happen in the future. The big difference is that we will be here, and we may even have an influence on it. We're already having some influence on our climate (nothing compared to what the algae have done before us; you want something powerful, you turn to the algae). But, nonetheless, we do have a big impact on the earth, and I have great faith—because I have to—that our descendants will be doing phenomenal things, whether it's resetting the sun so we don't get lost as it becomes a red giant, or whether it's moving planet Earth or the moon, or settling elsewhere, and so on.

The last big question, which everyone loves, is: Are we alone? And that's what helps to give us our view of ourselves. Once you get past the questions of what's for dinner and how you make babies, these are humankind's greatest, most profound questions: Where do we come from? Where are we going? And are we alone? (I like to summarize it all as "Battlestar Galapagos.") But now is the first time in human history that we can approach these scientifically. This is because we now know so much more about planets and stars outside of our own solar system.

Molecular evolution has exploded in the last thirty or forty years. When I was in graduate school we'd sit around on a Friday night hypothesizing about the relationship between different microbes, and at the end of dinner someone would say, "yes, but we'll never know for sure." Now we can go in at the molecular level and we do know with some sort of certainty. And in the sort of work I do—life in extreme environments—we're at a stage now where we have spacecraft on Mars taking selfies. Our robotic surrogates have gone to all these places in our solar system and beyond and looked back at us. We have gained this perspective of space.

Incidentally, a good friend, Rusty Schweickart, was the pilot on *Apollo 9* for the lunar module, and he was the first human to be sitting out there tethered to the spacecraft, looking back at the earth realizing what a beautiful, fragile planet we have. I'm frequently asked which planet is my favorite. I don't know what they're expecting me to say—Neptune? It's Earth; our home. That it's a beautiful planet is something every astronaut comes back and tells us.



DUBBED "THE DAY THE EARTH SMILED," THIS IMAGE WAS TAKEN ON JULY 19, 2013, BY NASA'S CASSINI SPACECRAFT AND SHOWS SATURN'S RINGS. BUT ALSO (AS INDICATED BY THE ARROW) PLANET EARTH.

Someday we'll have to send humans to colonize the moon, Mars, and beyond, and they will start to think of Earth as the homeland of their ancestors, a data-processing center in the sky, and later maybe something almost mythological. And maybe on one's birthday they'll get a coloring book of Earth or maybe a trip there. But it will be receding.

Looking at some stunning photographs from the *Cassini* orbiter, what you see is obviously Saturn, but what you may not notice is a little tiny dot, which is Earth—everyone you know, everyone you have ever known, everything that has happened in human history is on that little tiny dot. And then you look at a Hubble picture and imagine that we're an insignificant little pixel somewhere, if even that much, in the grand cosmos—and it's not to make us feel insignificant. No, indeed, we're part of this enormous family of molecules, of matter and energy.

Let's switch for a second to our place in time; that's something that's slightly more transcribed. Of course, we need to start in the beginning at the Big Bang, which wasn't actually all that long ago—13.8 billion years. That seems, to me at least, a little more tractable than discussing the question of space, which is so vast. So you have the beginning, but we're on a planet that isn't nearly that old—we were only born about 4.5682 billion years ago. Of course, a lot's happened since then, there's been a lot of evolution, and so on.

But there's so much we don't know. We don't know *how* long it took for life to originate. We don't even know how life originated. We're working on some of that in my lab, but even if we created life tomorrow, it wouldn't prove that

that's how life originated on planet Earth. There may be a point where we realize that determining how long it took for life to originate is some sort of computational chemistry problem. Maybe it's something really trivial, and we just don't know what the last step is. Or maybe it's something that is indeed very special, and in fact we are very special. Again, we just don't know, and even if we did—think about it—planet Earth is one example. It would be like me saying I read one of Isaac Asimov's books and therefore I know everything about every book ever written on planet Earth. That's ridiculous; I would have one example. Likewise, for us to be so arrogant as to say, we know about life on Earth, therefore we know about "Life," in a capital sense, would be absurd.

More than that, we as human beings are an amalgamation of all sorts of processes going on at very different time scales simultaneously; we're an integration of them all. Molecular processes occur at the sub-second level—the second, minute, hour... (you may imagine this speech is on the day or year scale; it's actually on the minute scale). Go back millions of years, you can get back to the last great mass extinction. Billions of years—we're starting to talk about the evolution of the earth and the solar system as a whole. But we can't possibly imagine most of those time scales, not really. I get paid to talk about billions of years. Likewise, I get paid to talk about nanoseconds, about the vastness of the cosmos. But the human mind cannot understand that. The time scale that we as humans can understand is zero to one hundred years or so. That's about it. Now, maybe if we were a plant we'd have a different perspective. For exam-

ple, you've got plants that live six weeks, and then you have Quaking Aspen colonies that live 80,000 years.

Can we actually circumvent some of these time issues? With some of today's technology we can. Over the last six years, I've started a program in synthetic biology for NASA. This is something that's been very important to the White House, it has gained enormous speed internationally, and it's something that has enormous potential to work for the betterment of humankind. Of course, I'm not as involved in the betterment of humankind as I am in looking to what we can do off-planet, but in a roundabout way it's to that end. We have a lot of potential for biofuels, for pharmaceuticals, and so on concerning human settlement, but once we start mixing around genes we can also do a lot to study evolution, study our past, and study our future.

I am the faculty advisor for a combined group of students from Stanford and Brown who participate in a molecular biology competition (the iGem competition). In 2012 one group of my students had this great project where they were specifically going out to make artificial extremophiles. They called it the "Hell Cell," which got laughs all the way up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. Be that as it may, it's a very interesting perspective circumventing some of these time issues. And before I get someone upset about tinkering with evolution and so on, keep in mind there is nothing that you ate tonight that hasn't been bred by humans. Everything you ate is domesticated, whether it was the wheat, or the grapes, or the chicken, or whatever. This is just a different strategy; it's not different in kind.

So we go back to looking at our solar system and ask: Are there places that potentially have life? NASA tends to use the strategy of looking for water, and so we have Venus, which used to be much more like Earth until it started to heat up. Run-away greenhouse is a perfect example for us, because water is a greenhouse gas. And so we think it's quite possible that there could've been life on the surface of Venus that possibly arose at the same time it arose on Earth.

As Venus got hotter and hotter, the life potentially went into the clouds, and that's another project we're approaching with synthetic biology. Earth, we know, is contaminated with life. Mars is close, and so maybe we'll find something that's Martian. Maybe on Ceres, which is the largest object in the asteroid belt and which we think has liquid water. Or Europa, or even Ganymede (both moons of Jupiter); or Enceladus, which is an ice-covered moon of Saturn with liquid water; or Titan, which is like a frozen chemistry experiment, and on, and on, and on. Maybe we'll find places there that are close to the environments of life on Earth, and when I say maybe we will, I mean we have—that's beyond question.

So instead of saying, oh, darn it—if it were only five degrees warmer we could put this organism there, we go to the lab and say, let's see if we can split the difference. Let's see if we can tweak Earth life, which doesn't then mean that we have this life on Enceladus or wherever, but it tells us what's possible. Because if I have something in a test tube

that can live on Enceladus, it means it is habitable. It doesn't mean that we know what's there, or that there's anything there—all it does is tell us it's possible, and that's huge in itself.

The mission that we're very proud of at NASA Ames is the Kepler mission, which has specifically been out there to look for earthlike planets. It's a satellite that's now on a secondary mission, but its primary mission was to stare at 150,000 planets without blinking. And by doing that, and looking for slight diminutions in light level, it's found this enormous number of extra-solar planets—not just the planets, *solar systems*. This is absolutely incredible.

Maybe someday we'll make life de novo in the lab. But the fact is that we really know so little about time, about space. When I first got to NASA at the end of 1987 I thought, they only have one solar system. They have to wait for someone to pay for another mission to get any data, so with one known solar system and one known form of life they were really on the slow track.

“I have great faith
(because I have to)
that our descendants
will be doing
phenomenal things,
whether it's
resetting the sun
so we don't get
lost as it becomes
a red giant, or
whether it's
moving planet Earth
or the moon, or
settling elsewhere.



RECURRING "LINEAE" ON THE SLOPES AT HALE CRATER MARS. ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2015, NASA SCIENTISTS ANNOUNCED THE DISCOVERY OF RECENT WATER STAINS IN CANYONS ON MARS, RAISING THE CHANCES THAT THE RED PLANET IS HABITABLE.

We still only have one known life form, but we've confirmed about 1,830 planets, 465 multiplanetary systems, and far more candidate planets from Kepler. Can you imagine if I said instead, "We have 1,830 confirmed examples of different life forms. And it turns out that 73 percent of them do this, and 22 percent do that, and out of that maybe 64 percent have humanist societies." It would be phenomenal! But we're probably closer to making life than finding it.

Let me end more on a philosophical note. What if, after all this searching through time and space for other life forms, we don't have any examples? Indeed, we'd have to face the reality that we are alone. That will never happen within our lifetime. We may find another life form within our lifetime, but we'll never be able to say conclusively that there is no other life form. So this is going to be something for our descendants to think about: If it's true that we are indeed special, is this maybe something that's a reversal of this last revolution? With all these revolutions that I started with—making us seemingly more insignificant—maybe it turns out that *we are it*. This would have huge moral and ethical implications, potentially huge religious implications, and environmental implications. Are we then responsible for keeping the rest of the universe and our solar system in order? We have a working principle that the origin of life happens when you have certain physical chemical conditions. We would have to rethink all that, because we know those conditions are out there.

If I could finish with a little Darwin:

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us... There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into

a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

That is about as beautiful a vision of the world as I could possibly imagine, except to add: imagine you are talking about that wherever the conditions are right. People sometimes ask me why I do what I do. There is poverty in the world, certainly; there are other sorts of problems in the world. So, why should I be taking the time and energy and taxpayer money to go out and look for life elsewhere?

Once, on a fieldtrip in the Rift valleys in Kenya I went into a couple of the schools with a colleague of mine, and one of the schools was outside in Nairobi, in the slums. This school had a corrugated roof and when it started to rain, you couldn't hear it. I'll be very blunt: it smelled of urine. There were chalkboards and kids crammed onto benches—two-thirds of these kids were orphans, and yet they came to talk with me on a day that wasn't even a school day. We went through the planets. We talked about whether there could be life on Mercury, if there could be life on Venus. And when I got past Earth I asked, "what's the planet beyond Earth?" One little boy jumped up and down, calling, "Teacher, teacher, teacher, I know! It's Jupiter!" And these kids, who had virtually nothing that we in America would consider material goods, just looked at him like, are you an idiot? It's Mars, of course! To me, the really stunning part was the lesson that it's much more than having a well-fed stomach to be human; that being human is part of the whole sense of exploration. Our ancestors were explorers, or they wouldn't have moved into the various continents as they did. Every child is born a scientist, every child has a sense of curiosity, a sense of wonder, and, I would argue, a sense of awe about the world. To me that's what makes us human.

With that, I'll say "ad astra," which means "to the stars." And again, I'm very honored to receive this award. Thank you very much. ■